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ABSTRACT

The Confidence Clinic at Clackamas Community College was designed to help women on welfare to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. The need for such a program was evidenced by the fact that 11% of the county's population were women heads of households who had below median family incomes, and by the apparent increase of such situations. The clinic which is located in a small two-bedroom home on the college campus gives women opportunities for self-evaluation, as well as information on job search techniques, training opportunities, community resources, understanding the problem of single-parent families, adult basic education, general educational development opportunities, driver training, home repairs, child development, family life, vocational and personality testing, personal problem solving, and wardrobe building. During winter and spring 1978, 108 women were referred to the 12-week program by various agencies; 16 of them were enrolled in both terms. The age range of the participants was from 20-60. Over 90% of all the students completing the one-term program got off the welfare rolls and a number of these enrolled in additional educational training at the college or elsewhere. Several found full-time jobs and others got married. The typical schedule of topics for the program is included in the document. (MB)

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THE CONFIDENCE CLINIC:

A PROGRAM FOR SELF-ESTEEM, INDEPENDENCE, AND CAREER PLANNING

by Dr. Marvin Weiss

JC 780 553

CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Oregon City, Oregon

THE CONFIDENCE CLINIC:
A PROGRAM FOR SELF-ESTEEM, INDEPENDENCE, AND CAREER PLANNING

by: Dr. Marvin Weiss

In our society, today, people are constantly being reminded of their need to be independent - this is particulary true with minorities, which include women. As a COMMUNITY college, we at Clackamas, are always looking for ways in which to involve a broader segment of our society.

About two years ago, my President invited me to visit a program, for unemployed women who were on public welfare, in southern Oregon. After a two-day visit to Roseburg, we, at the College, contacted a number of agencies in our county, our Counseling staff, the Community Services staff, and some women, who were on welfare, and invited them to discuss development of a Clackamas County Confidence Clinic.

What is the Confidence Clinic? It became a structured short-term program primarily for individuals who are experiencing a transition in their lives due to divorce, separation, death, or changes in their traditional roles. It is evident that self-respect and esteem are sometimes lost in such transitions. Self-improvement, self-awareness, and social independence became the by-word for the Confidence Clinic and this was stressed through education, training, and personal growth and awareness of one's capabilities, which is the foundation for self-confidence. The primary focus, however, of the Confidence Clinic is to assist participants in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency. This includes a reduction of dependency and increasing self-esteem.

Simply speaking, the Confidence Clinic was designed to help women, on welfare, to <u>get off</u> the welfare rolls. This could be done in several ways, such as: by getting a job, and/or by chosing marriage.

The objectives of the program are to provide the following:

1) Help the participants to initiate independent and group projects in such areas as simple home electrical and plumbing repairs and car repairs.

2) Increase personal skills as well as develop pride in accomplishment.

3) Offer individual and group counseling, and emotional and psychological support during each session.

4) Assist individuals in defining marketable skills and career options.

5) Provide assistance in developing career programs, including application and registration for classes at educational institutions, such as our own college, and the facilitation of job placement for graduates of the program.

6) Provide support services necessary to enable program participants to continue in the Clinic with the minimum of personal and emotional conflicts. That includes providing baby-sitting services, enabling the enrolled students to receive some type of financial and transportation assistance.

7) Coordinate efforts of other social service agencies to serve as information and referral services and to avoid the duplication of services.

Was there a need for such a Clinic? We found that, of the county's total population, 11 percent, or 9,500, women are heads of households and below the median family income, as of the 1970 census. Studies revealed that single parent households are increasing and usually have lower standards of living. Consequently, with the divorce rates surpassing the marriage rates in Clackamas county, single parent households continue to increase - which parallels the

the national trends. It was obvious that many individuals in the community were unfamiliar with existing services. They also lacked financial means to provide their own support services, such as day-care and transportation. Many of these individuals lacked the self-confidence to cope with their situation. For some people it was easier to stay on welfare than to coordinate the necessary support services so that they could go to work. There was no central information or referral agency to coordinate existing services; unknowingly, agencies were "setting up" clients to fail because the clients lacked self-confidence and self-esteem.

The Confidence Clinic, which is located in a small two-bedroom home on the College campus, gives women the opportunities for self-evaluation, information on job search techniques, training opportunities, community resources, understanding the problem of single parent families, Adult Basic Education and general educational development opportunities, driver training, home repairs, child development, family life, vocational and personality testing, personal problem solving, and wardrobe building.

A tentative schedule was developed for the program and each term since its introduction, the schedule of activities is evaluated and changes are made relating to the needs of the students who are enrolled. It is a very flexible kind of organization.

The typical schedule during a twelve-week program, at the Confidence Clinic follows:

Week One. Orientation and discussion of the rules and basic communication skills.

Week Two: "Keeping Healthy to Keep Your Job." Examples of this week's activities were a discussion on diet, pap smears, breast exams, menopause, family planning, and doctor-patient relationships.

Week Three: "Experiencing Relationships." Discussion included male-female re-

lationships, employee-employer relationships and communications in relationships.

Week Four: "Positive Parenting for Working Women." The discussions included understanding children's behavior, single parenthood, cooperative parenting, and divorce.

Week Five: "Testing: Job and Personal." This involved apptitude and interest tests, personality tests, career opportunities, wages, and personal counseling.

Week Six: "Home maintenance." Discussion included painting, wallpapering, plumbing, electrical repairs, refinishing furniture, buying furnishings, and making furnishings.

Week Seven: "Transportation." Discussion included public transportation, buying and maintaining a car, comparative costs versus bus transportation and insurance.

Week Eight: "Money Management." Discussion included values clarification, consumer contracts, credit versus cash, debt counseling.

Week Nine: "Handling Emergencies." Discussion included first aid, drug/alcohol abuse, violence and crisis workshop.

Week Ten: "Job Search Workshop." This involved identifying job skills, resume' writing, appearance, interview skills, mock interviews, training resources and expectation of employers.

Week Eleven: "Job Counseling." Here CETA counselors talked with the clients who were eligible for placement.

Week Twelve: This included evaluation of the program and the topic, "Where Do We Go From Here?"

The programs are limited to fifteen or sixteen students. There are numerous referrals made by the various agencies to the staff in the Confidence Clinic. During the Winter and Spring terms, 1978, one-hundred and eight referrals were made, of which sixteen students were enrolled in both the Winter and Spring terms. The range of ages for the participants was from twenty to sixty years of age.

College officials are pleased with the results. A very high percentage, over ninety percent of all students who completed the one-term Confidence Clinic program, are now off the welfare rolls. A number of these students went on to enroll in additional educational training at Clackamas Community College or at other area institutions of higher learning. Several found full-time jobs, and still others are now married and removed from the welfare rolls as a result of their having the opportunity to gain self-esteem, independence, and to become involved in career planning for themselves.

For specific questions, which the reader might have, write to:

Clackamas County Confidence Clinic
19241 S. Beavercreek Road
Oregon City, Oregon 97045 or call:
(503) 656-2091 and ask for:
Gail Spitze, Counselor/Program Developer

The program has been very successful and the Colleges' role has been to support the program through testing, offering classes in ABE/GED, through the resources that we have in our staff, and by providing the facility, the utilities, and the supplies.

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